Elections Canada

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Performance Report

For the period ending March 31, 2009

(Original signed by)

Marc Mayrand
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

(Original signed by)

The Honourable Jay Hill, PC, MP
Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

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Section I – Overview

Chief Electoral Officer's Message

In 2008–09, Elections Canada faced challenges but also showed its strengths as an organization. The year saw our country's third general election in little more than four years and the first since I was appointed Chief Electoral Officer of Canada in February 2007. Like the previous two elections, it resulted in a minority government – an outcome that continues the pressure to which the agency has been subject in recent years.

Under its mandate, the agency must be prepared at all times to conduct an electoral event. In the past fiscal year, it clearly demonstrated that it is fulfilling that part of its mandate. During the year, Elections Canada was ready when called upon to conduct four by-elections, which were eventually superseded when Parliament was dissolved on September 7, 2008. The agency was equally ready to conduct the 40th general election, launched on that date.

Our post-event evaluations indicated that the agency was largely successful in its delivery of the 40th general election. This was the first general election in which electors had to prove identity and address before voting. Elections Canada implemented several measures to ensure that electors were informed of the new requirements and would not experience delays at the polling stations. While the conduct of the election was a success overall, there were some areas of concern. These are matters to which the agency will give attention in the 2009–10 fiscal year, particularly as I prepare my report to Parliament with recommendations for legislative changes.

In the past fiscal year, the agency also began implementing its *Strategic Plan 2008–2013.* This plan guides Elections Canada's change agenda, with the aim of improving the way we carry out our business. However, because of the timing of the 40th general election, some of the initiatives planned for 2008–09 were delayed or could not be completed.

I wish to thank the public and private sector organizations and the individuals who helped Elections Canada fulfill its mandate in 2008–09 – particularly the 308 returning officers, the thousands of workers in the general election and Elections Canada's dedicated staff. With their steady contribution, I am confident that we will continue meeting the high expectations of Canadians.

(Original signed by)

Marc Mayrand
Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

Summary Information

Raison d'être

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, commonly known as Elections Canada, is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. Its mandate is to:

- be prepared at all times to conduct a federal general election, by-election or referendum
- administer the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act*
- monitor compliance with and enforce electoral legislation
- conduct voter education and information programs
- provide support to the independent commissions in charge of adjusting the boundaries of federal electoral districts following each decennial census
- carry out studies on alternative voting methods and, with the approval of Parliament, test on-line voting processes for future use during electoral events

In fulfilling its mandate, Elections Canada appoints, trains and supports 308 returning officers and retains the services of 30 field liaison officers across Canada. It maintains the National Register of Electors, as well as electoral geography information that provides the basis for preparing maps and other geographic products used during electoral events.

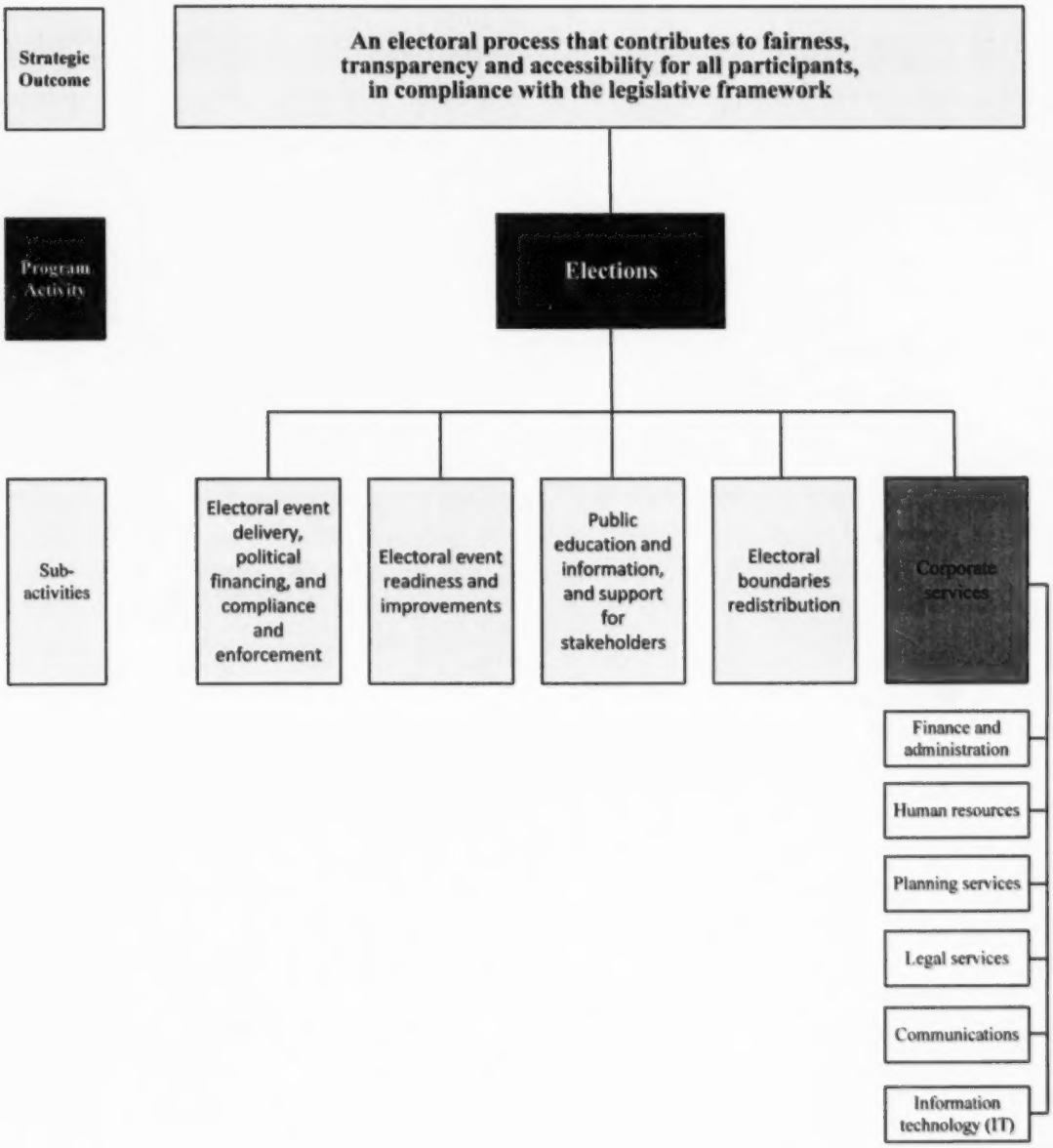
The agency also:

- registers political entities, including political parties, electoral district associations, candidates, leadership contestants, third parties that engage in election advertising and referendum committees
- administers the allowances, reimbursements and subsidies paid to eligible candidates, registered political parties and auditors
- monitors compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*, including compliance with political financing rules, during and between elections
- discloses information on registered parties and electoral district associations, registered parties' nomination and leadership contestants, candidates, third parties and referendum committees, including their financial returns
- recommends to Parliament amendments for the better administration of the *Canada Elections Act*. It does this through the statutory reports of the Chief Electoral Officer after electoral events, as well as through the provision of expert advice when Parliament studies electoral reform.

In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer appoints the Commissioner of Canada Elections whose mandate is to ensure that the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Referendum Act* are complied with and enforced.

Strategic Outcome and Program Activity Architecture

Elections Canada has a single strategic outcome, supported by the following Program Activity Architecture (PAA):


Strategic Outcome
An electoral process that contributes to fairness, transparency and accessibility for all participants, in compliance with the legislative framework
Program Activity
Elections
Sub-activities
Electoral event delivery, political financing, and compliance and enforcement
Electoral event readiness and improvements
Public education and information, and support for stakeholders
Electoral boundaries redistribution
Corporate services
Finance and administration
Human resources
Planning services
Legal services
Communications
Information technology (IT)

Summary of Performance

2008–09 Financial Resources ($ thousands)

Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual Spending
110,501	358,523	355,164

2008–09 Human Resources – Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)

Planned	Actual	Difference[1]
388	487	99

Performance Summary

The following chart summarizes Elections Canada's four key programs (mandated priorities), which complement our single strategic outcome.

Strategic Outcome: An electoral process that contributes to fairness, transparency and accessibility for all participants, in compliance with the legislative framework

Program Activity	2007–08 Actual Spending ($ thousands)	2008–09 Main Estimates	2008–09 Planned Spending	2008–09 Total Authorities	2008–09 Actual Spending
Key Program 1: Electoral event delivery, political financing, and compliance and enforcement	42,249	36,245	36,245	270,833	270,314
Key Program 2: Electoral event readiness and improvements	71,515	62,799	62,799	80,397	78,007
Key Program 3: Public education and information, and support for stakeholders	6,976	11,457	11,457	7,293	6,843
Key Program 4: Electoral boundaries redistribution	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**120,740**	**110,501**	**110,501**	**358,523**	**355,164**

[1] Planned FTEs did not include the additional resources required to deliver the 40th General Election.

Contribution of Priorities to the Strategic Outcome

The chart below summarizes progress on the agency's 2008–09 priorities. Each priority supports Elections Canada's strategic outcome.

Operational Priorities	Type	Assessment of Progress Toward Priorities
1. Maintain a state of readiness to deliver electoral events	Ongoing	The agency established readiness dates and objectives throughout the period. Preparations and projects were completed in accordance with the timelines established. Along with readiness plans, Elections Canada developed contingency plans for the possibility that a general election would be called before readiness projects had been completed.
2. Redevelop the Special Voting Rules (SVR) system	Previously committed to	The agency proceeded with the application-construction phase of the SVR system redevelopment. A testing phase will follow and the project will reach completion during 2009–10.
3. Develop a framework for evaluating all event advertising campaigns	Previously committed to	The scope of the framework was expanded to cover all communications activities carried out during electoral events. A first draft of the framework was received in late March 2009.
4. Train and educate political entities on the rules of political financing	New	In preparation for the 40th general election, the agency held training sessions on political financing for official agents of candidates and financial agents of electoral district associations. We also provided training for these clients at the request of the parties. We developed various new training materials.
5. Review the mandate and composition of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties (ACPP)	New	At the committee's June 2008 meeting, members had a first opportunity to discuss its current mandate and structure, and to share long-term expectations.

Management Priority	Type	Assessment of Progress Toward Priorities
1. Update our Information Technology (IT) and field systems	Previously committed to	The agency developed infrastructure for the multi-year renewal of its IT environment. Progress was slower than planned as a result of activities associated with the 40th general election.
2. Modernize our human resources	Previously committed to	Elections Canada's human resources strategy for 2009–13 entered the final drafting stage.

During the last fiscal year, Elections Canada also started work on its five-year strategic plan, which is driven by the three objectives of Trust, Accessibility and Engagement. Some of the initiatives listed in the tables above also contributed to these strategic objectives.

Trust

- Elections Canada focused on providing training to political entities and improving its audit and system functions.

Accessibility

- The agency established a management framework for this strategic objective and initiated on-line registration and voting projects. It also developed a short-term accessibility agenda.

Engagement

- The agency commissioned a study of youth electoral engagement in Canada.
- It initiated a review of the structure and mandate of the ACPP.

Each of these initiatives is discussed further under the relevant key program.

Operating Environment and Risk Analysis

Elections Canada's 2008–09 Report on Plans and Priorities identified three main risks or challenges confronting the agency:

- a short and uncertain business cycle in a context of minority governments
- organizational strain caused by maintaining a constant state of heightened readiness
- an aging IT infrastructure

Following is a brief overview of how these risks materialized in 2008–09, how the agency managed them and what the implications are for the agency's performance.

Short and uncertain business cycle – The length of Elections Canada's business cycle continues to vary in the ongoing situation of minority governments. Although the *Canada Elections Act* provides for intervals of up to four years between general elections, the 40th general election took place less than three years after the 39th general election. The timing of the election slowed or delayed a number of initiatives: renewal of the agency's IT infrastructure (see below), improvements to the National Register of Electors, redevelopment of the SVR system and consideration of the feedback we received through consultations we held in spring and summer 2008 on the new voter identification requirements. The uncertainty about election dates also continues to make long-term planning a challenge for Elections Canada.

Organizational strain – Maintaining a constant state of heightened readiness imposes a strain on the organization. The current succession of minority governments is unprecedented; it brings with it an increased volume of work resulting from closely spaced general elections, recent far-reaching electoral reforms and further proposed reforms. Elections Canada is simply not designed to handle such a high level of continuous demands for such a long time. In 2007–08, the Treasury Board of Canada approved the agency's submission for an increase in annual funding to augment our base of indeterminate employees by 74 full-time equivalents. Staffing began in 2007–08 and

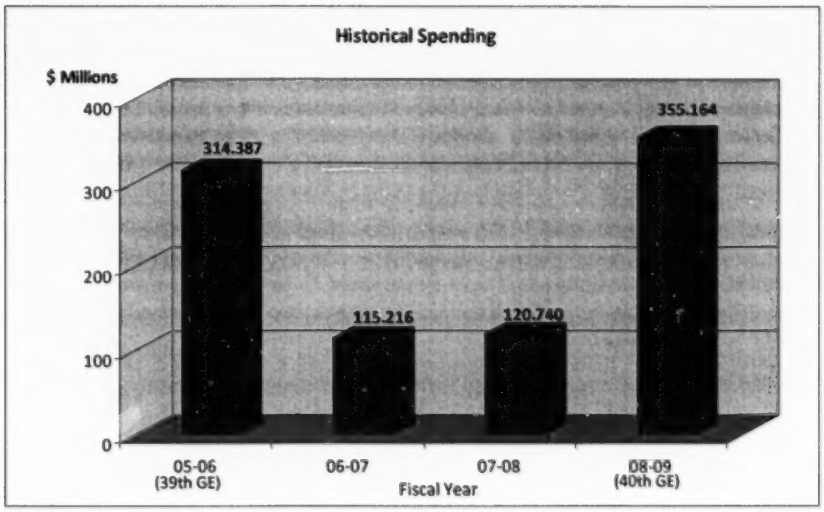
continued in 2008–09. To continue dealing with this pressure in 2009–10, the agency is planning an internal allocation exercise to optimize program resources (A-base review) as well as the launch of a human resources strategy. While these initiatives can provide some relief to the organization, additional long-term funding may be needed to ensure that the agency continues to fulfill its mandate.

Aging IT infrastructure – Elections Canada's IT infrastructure has reached the limits of its capability and cannot be augmented to meet new requirements. The constraining factors include a decentralized model for IT services, a lack of architecture and standards, the slow speed of networks and a low level of IT services at maturity. The agency has mitigated the constraints by adopting additional processes, procedures and workarounds, or in some cases by postponing new services. A multi-year project began in 2005–06 to renew our IT infrastructure; it will replace our current infrastructure with one better suited to our needs.

Expenditure Profile

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is funded by an annual appropriation, which covers the salaries of permanent full-time staff, and by the statutory authorities contained in the *Canada Elections Act,* the *Referendum Act* and the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.* The statutory authorities provide for all other expenditures, including the costs of electoral events, reimbursements of election expenses to eligible candidates and parties, quarterly allowances for eligible political parties, redistribution of electoral boundaries and expenses incurred by the Commissioner of Canada Elections or on behalf of the Commissioner to enforce the legislation. There are two further statutory items: the salary of the Chief Electoral Officer and contributions to employee benefit plans.

Spending Trend



Total spending in fiscal years 2005–06 and 2008–09 was higher because general elections occurred during those fiscal years.

The $41 million increase in total spending between FY 2005–06 and FY 2008–09 occurred largely because:

- The 40th GE costs recorded in FY 2008-09 were $15 million higher than those recorded in FY 2005–06 for the 39th GE[2].
- IT investments were $17 million higher in FY 2008–09.
- Salary costs were $6 million higher in FY 2008–09.

Voted and Statutory Items

($ thousands)

Vote # or Statutory Item (S)	Truncated Vote or Statutory Wording	2006–07 Actual Spending	2007–08 Actual Spending	2008–09 Main Estimates	2008–09 Total Authorities	2008–09 Actual Spending
15	Program expenditures	18,569	20,627	22,062	27,097	23,738
S	Expenses of elections	92,088	95,167	84,318	325,345	325,345
S	Salary of the Chief Electoral Officer	480	253	260	265	265
S	Contributions to employee benefit plans	4,079	4,693	3,861	5,816	5,816
	Total	**115,216**	**120,740**	**110,501**	**358,523**	**355,164**

[2] The 40th GE cost $2 million more than the 39th GE (see key program 1 performance analysis). The $15 million difference is a fiscal year difference only as event costs are attributed to more than than one fiscal year.

Section II – Analysis of Program Activities by Strategic Outcome

Introduction

Elections Canada operates under a Program Activity Architecture (PAA) that contains one strategic outcome:

> ***An electoral process that contributes to fairness, transparency and accessibility for all participants, in compliance with the legislative framework***

The PAA contains one program activity: Elections. Within this activity, Elections Canada is committed to providing four key programs, which are beneficial to Canadians:

Key Program 1:	Electoral event delivery, political financing, and compliance and enforcement
Key Program 2:	Electoral event readiness and improvements
Key Program 3:	Public education and information, and support for stakeholders
Key Program 4:	Electoral boundaries redistribution

The initiatives planned to improve our internal services and operations were described in the 2008–09 Report on Plans and Priorities under "Corporate Services and Program Enablers."

The current PAA structure does not allow the agency to report its performance at the program activity level, in accordance with Treasury Board requirements. We are therefore reporting our performance over the past fiscal years at the level of sub-activities, known at Elections Canada as *key programs*.

To comply with Treasury Board reporting policy, in 2009–10 Elections Canada is undertaking a review of its PAA.

Key Program 1: Electoral Event Delivery, Political Financing, and Compliance and Enforcement

Key Program Description

This key program includes the delivery of federal elections, by-elections and referendums as they are required. It also includes the administration of the provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* related to political financing. This involves maintaining a registry of political entities and third parties, reviewing financial returns to verify compliance with the statutory provisions, determining the reimbursement or subsidy amount to be paid to a political entity and/or its auditor, publishing financial returns and assisting political entities with compliance through filing extensions and return amendments. Finally, this key program requires Elections Canada to deal with complaints and referrals concerning contraventions of the *Canada Elections Act* and address alleged violations.

2008–09 Financial Resources ($ thousands)			2008–09 Human Resources (FTEs)		
Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Planned	Actual	Difference
36,245	270,833	270,314	47	88	41

Expected Results: Delivery of high-quality elections, by-elections and referendums	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Level of trust of electors regarding the administration of the electoral process, the list of electors, the voting process and election results	Preliminary survey data from the Canadian Election Study (CES)[3] for the 40th general election showed the following: • About 70 percent of electors expressed confidence in the way Elections Canada administers federal elections. • More than 80 percent of electors believed that the 40th general election was run fairly.
• Electors' perception of the accessibility of registration and the voting process	Based on evaluations we conducted of the 40th general election, voting went smoothly for the vast majority of electors: • About 97 percent found it easy to vote. • Around 97 percent found that the polling station they used was located at a convenient distance from their place of residence. • Fully 99 percent were satisfied with the language in which they were served at the polling station. • Some 96 percent were satisfied with the amount of time spent waiting to cast a ballot. • Fully 98 percent were satisfied with the instructions they received for casting a ballot.

[3] Since 1997, Elections Canada has partnered with the CES, a unique academic survey that has collected longitudinal data on Canadian federal elections since 1965. The replication of questions across studies, and the continual incorporation of new questions, makes the CES the most comprehensive account of the circumstances and the outcomes of national elections in Canada. The results of the 2008 Canadian Election Study will be made available to Elections Canada and the public in October 2009.

Expected Results: Delivery of high-quality elections, by-elections and referendums	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
	Our evaluations also indicate that administrative barriers do not appear to be a prominent factor in discouraging voter participation. Nevertheless, the proportion of electors mentioning these barriers as factors was higher among Aboriginal and youth electors than in the general population. We did not specifically ask electors to evaluate the accessibility of the registration process. However, according to our survey data, almost nine in ten electors received a voter information card (VIC), confirming that they were registered for the election. Even among youth and Aboriginal Canadians, a majority received a VIC (69 percent and 75 percent, respectively). Virtually all those who reported receiving a VIC said that the name and address were accurate (97 percent for name, 98 percent for address). There were no significant variations in the degree of accuracy of VIC by region, gender, age, education or household income. Some 6 percent of electors registered at the time of voting. This is consistent with the percentages in the last two general elections.
• Satisfaction of stakeholders (electors, political entities, election workers) with electoral products and services	As noted, our 40th general election evaluation found a strong level of satisfaction among electors. There were, however, reports of uneven service and inconsistent application of the voter identification rules by election workers. The fact that these problems occurred despite our best efforts highlights our growing concern about the agency's ability to ensure uniform service across the country while working within the constraints set by the Act on operating polling sites. According to our post-event evaluations, candidates generally felt quite positive about the agency's service during the election and the performance of their returning officer. Most candidates also reported positive experiences with the various administrative processes and activities associated with the election: • About 79 percent found that the overall quality of service received from Elections Canada was satisfactory. • Some 79 percent were satisfied with the way the returning officer ran the election in their electoral district. However, about one candidate in nine (11 percent) expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the voters lists provided to them by their returning officer, and a further 10 percent of surveyed candidates were unsure or provided no response. We will need to engage in a dialogue with candidates to better understand their concerns about this. Finally, our evaluations indicate that a vast majority of election workers believed they were well trained and prepared to implement the new voter identification requirements.

Expected Result: Fair, efficient and transparent administration of the political financing provisions of the Act	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Level of trust of Canadians and political entities in the administration of the political financing regime	During 2008–09, the agency did not assess the level of trust of Canadians or political entities in relation to the administration of the political financing regime.
• Financial agents and official agents of political entities satisfied with the political financing support, services and products received from Elections Canada	Cross-country training sessions were held for official agents of candidates and financial agents of electoral district associations. During these sessions, participants evaluated the sessions and the agency's client services. The participants responded as follows: • About 87 percent of electoral district association agents and 83 percent of candidates' agents rated the agency's support as very good or excellent. • A full 99 percent of session participants indicated that the training sessions met their objectives. We also conducted focus groups with official agents and financial agents in the summer of 2008. The results indicate that official agents and financial agents generally rated their interactions with the Elections Canada toll-free Support desk as constructive. They described our representatives as courteous, genuinely helpful, resourceful and available.

Expected Results: – Effective compliance and enforcement programs – Electoral events carried out in accordance with legal requirements	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Turnaround time for resolving complaints and referrals	Most of the complaints received in 2008–09 were concluded or resolved during the fiscal year.
• Ratio of complaints resolved to complaints received during the reporting period	For the 40th general election, 95 percent of the 512 complaints received were closed. In 2008–09, 82 percent of complaints were closed out of a total of 1,019 (including 250 complaints received before April 1, 2008, and 769 received after that date).
• Investigative capacity	In 2008–09, the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections strengthened its investigative capacity by rebuilding and expanding the resources of its investigative team. Most of the work is now conducted at Elections Canada in Ottawa. Timeliness and quality have improved. There were 250 open files at the beginning of 2008–09 and 185 at the end of the fiscal year. Capacity was sufficient to handle complex investigations as well as less complex matters.

Benefits for Canadians

This key program provides Canadians with an electoral process that is democratic, fair and in compliance with the *Canada Elections Act.* In 2008–09, the program achieved its outcome by delivering a general election that met the high standards expected by Canadians and that was conducted in accordance with the Act, including the new provisions for voter identification requirements.

Recent years have seen the introduction of a new regulatory framework for election expenses and the reporting of political finances. This framework helps ensure a fair electoral process and strengthens public confidence in its integrity. Elections Canada continuously seeks to improve the quality of its compliance audit processes for candidates' electoral campaign returns. When a return shows that a reimbursement of election expenses is due, Elections Canada expects to meet its service standard by promptly issuing payment to the qualifying candidate.

Performance Analysis

In the summer of 2008, Elections Canada undertook to administer four by-elections, called for two separate dates that September. All were superseded on September 7 with the launch of the 40th general election. The agency successfully managed the overlapping by-election calendars as well as the adjustments required by withdrawing the writs for the by-elections. This was the first time that Elections Canada had handled such a combination of events.

The 40th general election was a complex undertaking involving a large number of diverse activities, with a total cost estimated at $280.5 million (compared to $278.4 million for the 39th general election in January 2006)[4]. The entire event unfolded smoothly, even though for this election, legislative changes had come into effect that had an impact on every single voter. Nevertheless, challenges were encountered in three areas:

- *Voter identification procedures* – This was the first general election held after Bill C-31 came into force in June 2007, requiring electors to prove their identity and address before they could vote. For the election, the agency's communications and outreach efforts focused on these new identification requirements. Most electors came to the polls prepared to meet the new requirements, and a large majority had a positive attitude toward them – 94 percent for the identity requirement and 88 percent for the proof-of-address requirement. However, the requirements apparently were more challenging for certain groups of electors.
- *Political financing rules* – Elections Canada held focus-group sessions with representatives of various registered parties, including the five parties eligible to receive a quarterly allowance. The participants in the sessions indicated that they found it very challenging to become familiar with the Act and the requirements of their position. Agents struggle with the complex rules and requirements set out in the Act.

[4] The total cost of an election is reported across fiscal years and across Elections Canada's key programs. Therefore, key program 1 expenditures are less than the total cost of the 40th General Election.

- *Administrative processes* – The Act imposes restrictions on Elections Canada's ability to organize and administer electoral events in a businesslike manner while maintaining the high standards of integrity, security and service expected by Canadians. It is our view that this aspect of the Act warrants review and simplification.

An essential factor in delivering an electoral event is providing training to political entities. For the 40th general election, the agency offered training to the official agents of candidates and the financial agents of registered electoral district associations. The materials developed for the training provided clearer direction on political financing issues. Evaluations of the training sessions and materials were positive.

During 2008–09, the agency prepared a manual that explains the process of auditing political entities' financial returns. The manual will be an important reference document for auditors, as well as an information tool for the public and other electoral agencies. It will be available in 2009–10. We also introduced a new requirement for original documentation from third parties for expenses invoiced to candidate's campaigns by registered associations or registered parties. The intent was to provide better validation of expenses and further assurance on commercial value, as well as to increase trust in the results of the audit process.

For details of the conduct and evaluation of the 40th general election, go to www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&document=index&dir=res/40eval&lang=e#1.

Lessons Learned

It appears to us that the new voter identification requirements were more challenging for certain groups of electors, including Aboriginal Canadians, homeless electors, residents of long-term care facilities, students, individuals without a permanent civic address and those who did not have a driver's licence. It is the proof-of-address requirement that appears to challenge these electors most. Elections Canada will therefore explore the possibility of adding the voter information card to the list of authorized documents so that it can be used as proof of address, in combination with another authorized piece of identification, to meet the new voter identification requirements. This is likely to involve some adjustments to the card.

The experience of the 40th general election raised concerns that the political financing rules set out in the Act have become burdensome for political entities and their representatives. Elections Canada can implement some limited administrative initiatives to ease the regulatory burden on political entities, but the legislation itself contains most of the complexity that makes the current regime daunting. We will therefore examine whether aspects of the legislation can be improved to reduce the regulatory burden, while maintaining the key objectives of transparency and fairness. The Chief Electoral Officer will suggest potential improvements in his next report to Parliament on recommended changes to the Act.

Turnout in the 40th general election was the lowest recorded in any Canadian federal election. This continues a long-term trend dating from the 1960s. It is evidently the result of societal issues that go far beyond Elections Canada's administration of electoral events. The agency will continue working at reducing administrative barriers to participation. We will also conduct and share research to better understand the long-term decline in participation rates.

Many financial agents and official agents of political entities are unable to attend live training sessions. To make training more accessible, the agency will develop on-line tutorials focusing on key subject areas of interest to clients.

The Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections will continue to assess the need for investigative work to be conducted on short notice, under contract, in various regions and either official language.

Key Program 2: Electoral Event Readiness and Improvements

Key Program Description

This key program includes keeping electoral processes, systems, databases and materials up to date as well as training staff and election officers to be ready for any electoral event. Elections Canada regularly updates the National Register of Electors from the most current data sources. This key program also includes improving electoral events in response to stakeholders' concerns – for example, by implementing new legislation and new registration and voting methods.

2008–09 Financial Resources ($ thousands)			2008–09 Human Resources (FTEs)		
Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Planned	Actual	Difference
62,799	80,397	78,007	282	345	63

Expected Results:

- State of readiness achieved and maintained to deliver electoral events whenever they may be called
- Improved delivery of electoral events in response to stakeholders' concerns and expectations

Performance Indicator	Results Achieved
• Level of agency preparation at various readiness dates	Elections Canada sets readiness dates between electoral events. At each date, it assesses its preparations for conducting a general election, as well as the risks. The assessments conducted during 2008–09 did not reveal any concerns.
• Extent to which the agency mitigates the risks of a general election being called before a readiness date (e.g. contingency plans are in place for all key services)	Readiness contingency plans were implemented for all key services to ensure that the agency was ready for a general election at all times. After the 40th general election on October 14, 2008, the agency set September 1, 2009, as the date by which it would re-establish full election readiness. The agency developed contingency plans to address risks.
• Timely and effective implementation of changes to the electoral process	For the 40th general election, Elections Canada modified the voting procedures to reflect the new voter identification requirements set out in bills C-31 and C-18, adopted in 2007. The agency also made changes to improve the accuracy of elector records in the Register: it provided parties or candidates with the preliminary lists of electors in electronic format, with a unique identifier for each elector.

Benefits for Canadians

This key program provides Canadians with the ability to exercise their democratic rights to vote and be candidates in federal electoral events. In 2008–09, the program was carried out by preparing four by-elections and the 40th general election.

Performance Analysis

Legislative Changes

During 2008–09, the agency took a number of steps to continue implementing the provisions of Bill C-31, including measures designed to further improve the Register:

- The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) added a second question to the Elections Canada consent section on income tax forms. Along with the question asking for consent to transmit elector information to Elections Canada for the purpose of updating the Register, a question had been added for the 2007 tax year to confirm Canadian citizenship. The result was an unexpected decline of nearly 8 percent in the consent rate. In winter 2008–09, Elections Canada and the CRA worked to raise awareness of the consent question among tax preparers and software developers. Preliminary results for the 2008 tax year show a rise in the consent rate approaching its previous level. The addition of the second question was meant to enable Elections Canada to add new electors, especially youth, to the Register without first writing to them to confirm their citizenship, as is currently the practice. The agency is currently validating the reliability of this new information. Once the results are available, we will consult stakeholders before adding electors using this new method without additional confirmation of citizenship.
- The CRA began to provide information on deceased tax filers to Elections Canada. This allows the agency to remove more records of deceased persons from the Register, thereby resulting in more accurate voters lists.

Operational Improvements

Special Voting Rules – During the reporting period, the agency advanced its Special Voting Rules (SVR) System Redevelopment project. This will merge dated software applications into a single integrated system, ensuring better ongoing support. The new system will also provide more reliable data and eliminate redundant information, while increasing administrative efficiency and making it possible to handle a higher volume of requests from SVR electors. The result will be better service for electors who vote by special ballot. The 40th general election delayed implementation of this project to 2009–10.

On-line registration – Another project initiated during the fiscal year concerned on-line registration. This will make the electoral process more accessible by offering electors additional, innovative ways to register. In 2008–09, the initiation and definition-of-business-requirements phases were completed. When on-line registration will be introduced depends on the progress of Elections Canada's Information Technology Renewal project, resolving legal and privacy issues, and identifying and implementing an appropriate authentication strategy. Current plans are to offer this service by the end of the 2010–11 fiscal year.

On-line voting – The agency initiated an on-line voting project, which, like on-line registration, will help support our strategic objective of accessibility. We began to realign our organizational structure and initiated staffing actions for critical positions. The next steps, planned for 2009–10, are to develop a project management framework, conduct an environmental scan and prepare a research report on e-voting initiatives. The aim is to test a pilot on-line voting system in a by-election by 2013; we will of course require the approval of Parliament, as specified in the *Canada Elections Act.*

Other accessibility options – Elections Canada started to explore other accessibility options. In 2008–09, a short-term accessibility agenda was developed to investigate ways of making voting easier for electors in rural areas, seniors, electors who use wheelchairs and those who are visually impaired. The aim is to improve overall elector access to registration and voting services.

Telephony – In past electoral events, we have been challenged by the need to promptly provide the telephony infrastructure for our 308 local offices and 120 satellite offices across the country. These offices are leased only for the electoral period (approximately two months). To ensure that telephony services would be readily available for the 40th general election, we leased telephone handsets and lines for potential offices identified by returning officers. This solution required a substantial investment of financial and human resources. After the 39th general election, Elections Canada commissioned a study to assess the potential for realizing efficiencies by applying a risk-management approach. This initiative identified opportunities for reducing the number of telephone lines initially required in local offices, as well as using wireless technology while additional land lines are being installed. This approach is now being followed in preparation for the 41st general election.

Lessons Learned

With each general election, Elections Canada sees opportunities to refine its readiness-planning framework. However, a key fact is that the agency was able to remain in a constant state of readiness throughout the reporting period and also to respond successfully to the call of the 40th general election. This proves that our readiness-planning framework is very effective.

We plan to pay attention to the financial management component of our readiness-planning framework in 2009–10. It is time to review the financial models used to determine election costs, particularly as they relate to Elections Canada's activities in Ottawa. We will also work to improve our ability to isolate the costs associated with maintaining our organization in a state of constant readiness in the context of minority governments.

Key Program 3: Public Education and Information, and Support for Stakeholders

Key Program Description

This key program informs and educates electors in general, as well as specific groups, about federal electoral events and the federal electoral framework. It aims to ensure that Canadians are informed and aware of major changes to the electoral process and that they understand them. The program also helps the agency evaluate its key activities by developing qualitative and quantitative research to assess Elections Canada's performance in delivering electoral events. Under this key program, the agency provides both parliamentarians and political parties with advice and technical support, including expertise and technical advice on initiatives regarding electoral legislation.

2008–09 Financial Resources ($ thousands)			2008–09 Human Resources (FTEs)		
Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Planned	Actual	Difference
11,457	7,293	6,843	59	54	(5)

Expected Results:

- Electors become aware of their right to vote, key dates in the electoral calendar, and voting rules and procedures.
- Groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights are engaged in electoral processes and initiatives relevant to them.

Performance Indicator	Results Achieved
• Public awareness and understanding of Elections Canada's public education and information campaign	Over 90 percent of Canadians were aware of the 40th general election. Almost all Canadians understood the voter identification requirements, knew that they were registered (if in fact they were) and knew how to vote. Nearly 80 percent of Canadians recalled at least one of Elections Canada's media products targeting electors. About 50 percent of electors remembered receiving a reminder card or householder (direct-mail flyer) from the agency. While opportunities remain for Elections Canada to refine its communications and outreach programs further, the multimedia approach used in the 40th general election clearly succeeded in informing Canadian electors about the new voter identification requirements and the election itself.

Expected Results: – Electors become aware of their right to vote, key dates in the electoral calendar, and voting rules and procedures. – Groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights are engaged in electoral processes and initiatives relevant to them.	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Timely dissemination of information on the conduct of an election to Canadians, political parties and Parliament	Elections Canada's advertising campaign was approved before the 40th general election. Media placement proceeded as planned. At the appropriate time in the election calendar (e.g. arrival of the voter information card, advance polls and election day), advertisements appeared with relevant information. Within days of the issue of the writ, the agency sent information kits to national and local associations representing target populations such as youth, Aboriginal electors, ethnocultural communities and special needs groups. Throughout the election, requests for additional information were completed on the day they were received. The Chief Electoral Officer submitted his report on the 40th general election to Parliament on February 2, 2009, within the statutory 90-day time frame.

Expected Result: Improved channels of communication with parliamentarians and political parties	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Satisfaction level of parliamentarians and political parties with the quality of advice and technical support provided by Elections Canada	Not specifically evaluated during the period of this report.

Benefits for Canadians

This key program encourages Canadians to exercise their democratic rights, and it educates them about the benefits of doing so as well as about the electoral process. The impact of this program on Canadians was tangible throughout the 40th general election: Canadians became aware of the 40th general election, learned and understood the new voter identification requirements, knew whether they were registered and knew how, when and where to vote.

Performance Analysis

The agency took steps to improve its primary tools for informing and educating electors:

- We launched a two-year initiative to redesign our Web site, with the aim of making it more accessible for visitors in general but particularly for persons with special needs. In 2008–09, we held consultations with the public, major stakeholders and employees; the information gathered will improve the effectiveness of Elections Canada's public information and education campaigns, with a special emphasis on youth. We also created a section of the Web site for voters with special needs and posted information in various formats, such as video clips in sign language.
- We have developed a draft framework to evaluate communications activities carried out during electoral events. This framework will measure the awareness, understanding and impact of our key messages, and it will assess the return on investment of our media advertising campaigns. The result should be more efficient and effective advertising campaigns.

We have begun work on a corporate-research framework that supports our strategic objectives and enables us to better assist key stakeholders. Consultations were undertaken with federal agencies as well as provincial and international electoral management bodies to learn from their experience. Consultations within Elections Canada will be held in 2009–10.

Other activities include the following:

- During 2008–09, we consulted a number of groups of electors about the potential challenges and solutions associated with satisfying the voter identification requirements. The findings of these consultations are available on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&dir=res/id&document=index&lang=e.
- As part of the 2009 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference, we hosted a workshop on Aboriginal electoral participation and ways to encourage Aboriginal electors to vote. The research presented at the event is available on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=med&dir=eve/APRC&document=index&lang=e.
- We also commissioned a study of youth electoral engagement in Canada. This study is available on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&document=index&dir=res/youeng&lang=e.

In the context of the 40th general election, we continued our partnership with the CES[5]. To evaluate our own performance in the general election, the agency conducted surveys of key stakeholders, including electors, candidates, election officers, associations representing targeted groups and journalists.

We developed and implemented a corporate framework to assist the Chief Electoral Officer in his appearances before parliamentary committees. This strengthened our relationship with parliamentarians by improving our ability to provide technical advice on legislative initiatives or issues under review by committees. For example, the Chief Electoral Officer invited members of the Standing Committee on House Affairs to familiarize themselves with Elections Canada's operations by touring our offices in Ottawa, and he discussed with the members how to make his appearances more efficient.

We also initiated a review of the structure and mandate of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties (ACPP). The aim was to enhance information sharing and provide better feedback to the agency by engaging the parties in key electoral issues. Channels for communication between the agency and the committee will be improved, making it easier to resolve issues that might arise. The new structure is expected to be fully in place during 2009.

Lessons Learned

The evaluations conducted by the agency after the 40th general election concluded that, overall, almost all Canadians were aware of the election, understood the voter identification requirements, were aware that they were registered (if they were) and knew how to vote. While opportunities remain for Elections Canada to refine its communications and outreach programs further, the conclusions of the evaluation confirm that the multimedia approach used in the 40th general election was clearly successful at informing Canadian electors of both the new voter identification requirements and the election itself.

The Web site consultations indicated that Canadians and stakeholders find it difficult to locate basic information about an electoral event on the Elections Canada Web site. The consultations also highlighted the need to regularly test our Web products for usability.

The workshop on Aboriginal electoral participation and the study of youth electoral engagement increased our understanding of the factors that influence turnout in these targeted populations. This information will assist us in developing education and information programs.

The discussions with the ACPP underlined the importance of consultation between the agency and the committee on issues requiring timely resolution. These discussions also highlighted the value of periodically reviewing the committee's mandate and approach, and the importance of flexibility as the composition of the committee changes and new needs emerge.

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[5] For details of this unique election study, see the footnote on page 10.

Key Program 4: Electoral Boundaries Redistribution

Key Program Description

This program activity is initiated after each decennial (10-year) census. Federal electoral boundaries and representation in the House of Commons are readjusted to reflect changes and movements in Canada's population. Readjustment of federal electoral boundaries is carried out by independent commissions in each province, with the support of Elections Canada. The next redistribution will start once we receive the 2011 Census population figures from Statistics Canada (according to current plans, in March 2012).

2008–09 Financial Resources ($ thousands)			2008–09 Human Resources (FTEs)		
Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual Spending	Planned	Actual	Difference
-	-	-	-	-	-

Expected Result: Efficient and non-partisan administration of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act*	
Performance Indicator	**Results Achieved**
• Support services provided by Elections Canada are appropriate; they allow redistribution activities to be conducted in an effective and timely manner	The agency carried out pre-redistribution activities in 2008–09: an environmental scan and a documentation review. These activities will support the planning process, scheduled to begin in 2009–10.

Benefits for Canadians

This program ensures that the representation of Canadians in the House of Commons is fair and equitable relative to the population density within Canada's federal electoral boundaries. In 2008–09, the program was carried out through preparatory activities that will support the official planning for redistribution, scheduled to begin in 2010–11. These activities will help facilitate efficient, non-partisan administration of the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.*

Performance Analysis

During 2008–09, the agency undertook activities in preparation for redistribution. We began a review of documentation, which we will complete in 2009–10.

Redistribution will formally begin in 2012, once the agency receives the 2011 Census population figures.

Corporate Services and Enablers

Key Program Description

Elections Canada's internal services and enabler groups support the agency as it fulfills its mandate.

Performance Highlights

Information Technology Renewal

In 2008–09, Elections Canada's multi-year IT Renewal initiative focused on building infrastructure to aid in program governance and to provide guidance and advice to project managers. The 40th general election and related activities slowed some aspects of the work and required the agency to refocus the initiative on its core elements. IT Renewal will no longer be managed as a single initiative; instead, the agency will focus on three of the most critical component projects. The remaining projects will be implemented gradually. The aim remains to provide Elections Canada with the IT environment it requires to fulfill its mandate.

Human Resources Modernization

In 2008–09, Elections Canada's long-term human resources strategy for 2009–13 entered the final-draft stage, with the launch scheduled for the first quarter of 2009. The strategy is linked to the agency's long-term strategic direction and objectives.

In response to the *Public Service Modernization Act*, the 2005 recommendations of the Auditor General and the feedback received from central agencies, Elections Canada also made great progress in 2008–09 in integrated planning. For each of the agency's sectors, we developed operational plans integrating elements of activity, human resources and financial planning.

Review of the Agency's Program Activity Architecture and Development of a High-Level Performance-Management Framework for Electoral Events

In 2007, Elections Canada adopted a new strategic plan using performance indicators. We used the 40th general election to establish benchmark data for many of these indicators. The agency has streamlined its reporting to Parliament to focus more on results and benefits to Canadians. For the 40th general election, we put in place a more formal framework for evaluating the conduct of general elections, and an integrated evaluation report was presented to Parliament in June 2009. As part of the process of revising our Program Activity Architecture, we plan to make progress in developing our suite of performance indicators in 2009–10.

Internal Audit Activities and Audit Committee Implementation

Elections Canada has completed the implementation of its internal audit function, and the audit team performed three internal audits during the fiscal year. An Audit Committee was formed and advised the Chief Electoral Officer on governance, risk management and controls.

Section III – Supplementary Information

Financial Highlights

The financial highlights presented in this *Departmental Performance Report* are intended to serve as a general overview of Elections Canada's financial position and operations. A more detailed financial statement can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=financial&dir=rep/est/dpr2009&lang=e.

(thousands of dollars)	2009	2008	% Change
At End of Year (March 31)			
Condensed Statement of Financial Position			
Total Assets	96,033	45,405	112%
Total Liabilities	72,799	26,558	174%
Total Equity	23,234	18,847	23%
For the Year Ending March 31			
Condensed Statement of Operations			
Total Expenses	359,526	129,038	179%
Total Revenues	5	70	(93%)
NET COST OF OPERATIONS	359,521	128,968	179%

The variances between 2009 and 2008 are mainly a result of spending related to the 40th general election, which was held in October 2008.

List of Tables

All Supplementary Information tables found in the *2008–2009 Departmental Performance Report* can be found on the Treasury Board of Canada Web site at www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2008-2009/index-eng.asp.

- Details of Transfer Payment Programs (TPPs)
- Response to Parliamentary Committees and External Audits
- Internal Audits and Evaluations

Other Items of Interest

2008–2009 Report on Plans and Priorities

A copy of Elections Canada's *2008–2009 Report on Plans and Priorities* can be found on the Treasury Board of Canada Web site at www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/2008-2009/inst/ceo/ceo00-eng.asp.

Strategic Plan 2008–2013

A copy of the *Strategic Plan 2008–2013* can be downloaded from the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/eca/stratplan/Strategic%20Plan%202008-2013_EN.pdf.

Elections Canada's Internal Audit Function

Information about the activities of Elections Canada's internal audit function can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=eca&dir=audit&document=index&lang=e.

New Legislation

An analysis of proposed amendments to electoral legislation with a potential impact on our business can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=legislation&dir=rep/est/dpr2009&lang=e.

Judicial Decisions and Proceedings

An analysis of judicial decisions and proceedings that may affect electoral legislation can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=proceedings&dir=rep/est/dpr2009&lang=e.

Federal Political Contributions and Estimated Tax Credits Claimed

The table on federal political contributions and estimated tax credits claimed can be found on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=contributions&dir=rep/est/dpr2009&lang=e.

Contacts for Further Information

Address Elections Canada
257 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M6

Telephone 1-800-463-6868
toll-free in Canada and the United States

001-800-514-6868
toll-free in Mexico

613-993-2975
from anywhere in the world

For people who are deaf or have difficulty hearing:
TTY 1-800-361-8935
toll-free in Canada and the United States

Fax 613-954-8584
1-888-524-1444
toll-free in Canada and the United States

Web site www.elections.ca

Media Information

Telephone 1-877-877-9515
613-993-2224
TTY 1-800-361-8935

Fax 613-954-8584